



michigan high school athletic association

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Student-Athlete Belief Statement Approved By Council At Fall Meeting

EAST LANSING, Mich. – Dec. 12 – A belief statement about school sports, written by members of its Student Advisory Council was approved for publication in the Handbook of the Michigan High School Athletic Association by its Representative Council during its annual fall meeting here on November 30.

The fall meeting is the first of three for the 19-member legislative body of the Association's nearly 1,800 member schools. All but five members are elected by member schools. Four members are appointed by the Council to facilitate representation of females and minorities; and the 19th position is occupied by the Superintendent of Public Instruction or designee.

The Student Advisory Council is made of 11th and 12th graders from around the state. This 16-member panel was created during the 2006-07 school year to help represent the student-athletes of MHSAA member schools, and one of the first major tasks it chose to do was to develop a beliefs statement which reads as follows:

“As the voice of Michigan’s student-athletes, the Student Advisory Council’s role is to convey the message of how high school sports are supposed to be played. We are responsible for helping the MHSAA maintain a positive and healthy atmosphere in which interscholastic athletics can thrive.

*“We believe **athletes** should be competitive, sportsmanlike and excel academically. We believe **students** in the stands should have fun, but not take the focus away from the game. We believe **coaches** should act as teachers, helping student-athletes develop while still keeping high school sports in perspective. We believe that **parents** should always be positive role models and be supportive of their child's decisions. We believe **officials** commit their own time to high school sports and respect should always be shown and given to them.*

“The most important goal for student-athletes is to enjoy high school sports while keeping a high level of respect between all those involved in the games.”

The belief statement has already begun to become a part of the school sports culture, being read before athletic contests. A video involving the members of the Student Advisory Council is also being developed to be played on the video boards at future MHSAA Tournament events.

The Representative Council also approved a school sportsmanship feedback program to be implemented beginning in 2008-09. Schools will be evaluated on the sportsmanship of their student-athletes and coaching staff, as well as the management of the environment of the event by game officials. Officials would go online to provide feedback in those areas in terms of the sportsmanship being below to exceeding their expectations. The data provided would be used internally by schools to help identify positive and negative sportsmanship trends and game management issues. Officials would still deal with specific issue encountered at an event of a positive or negative manner by using the Officials Report Form.

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2-2-2 Fall Representative Council Meeting

Beginning in 2008-09, the MHSAA will purchase sports rules books from the National Federation of State High School Associations on an alternate year plan. The MHSAA provides rules books to schools and officials, and under this plan approved by the Council, will provide rules updates, when necessary, in the years in which books are not purchased. Michigan joins a growing number of state associations in purchasing rules books on an alternate year basis, a move that is expected to save the Association over \$58,000 annually.

In the only sport-specific action taken at the meeting, the Representative Council approved a unanimous request of the MHSAA Girls Gymnastics Committee to survey participants, coaches and students of schools sponsoring girls gymnastics, as well as MHSAA registered gymnastics judges regarding the placement of that sports season, asking if they would prefer the high school season in the fall, rather than the winter. Results of the survey are expected to be reported at the Council's winter meeting in East Lansing on March 14.

The fall meeting was also the last for four Representative Council members who have served the MHSAA for a combined total of 61 years. Council president Paul Ellinger, retiring superintendent at Cheboygan Public Schools; William Newkirk, retiring superintendent at Sanford Meridian Public Schools; Randy Salisbury, athletic director at Britton-Macon High School; and Leroy Hackley, athletic director at Jenison High School, were all honored for their service.

The MHSAA is a private, not-for-profit corporation of voluntary membership by over 1,800 public and private senior high schools and junior high/middle schools which exists to develop common rules for athletic eligibility and competition. No government funds or tax dollars support the MHSAA, which was the first such association nationally to not accept membership dues or tournament entry fees from schools. Member schools which enforce these rules are permitted to participate in MHSAA tournaments, which attract approximately 1.6 million spectators each year.

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MEDIA ADVISORY – The Student-Athlete Belief Statement is the topic of this week's edition of MHSAA Perspective, an audio program which is aired on over 30 radio stations across the state. You can listen to the program on the MHSAA Internet Broadcast Network – www.mhsaanetwork.com. Here is a direct link to the program -- <http://mhsaa.ezstream.net/play/index.cfm?id=E415B0B0B>

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